



# 2020 Census Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP) Quick Reference: Tribal Census Tracts

Tribal census tracts are statistical geographic units defined by the U.S. Census Bureau in cooperation with tribal officials to provide meaningful, relevant, and reliable data for small geographic areas within the boundaries of federally recognized American Indian reservations (AIRs) and/or off-reservation trust lands (ORTLs). As such, they meet the unique statistical data needs of federally recognized American Indian tribes. The delineation of tribal census tracts allows for an unambiguous presentation of census tract-level data specific to the federally recognized AIR and/or ORTL. Tribal census tract geography is maintained separately from standard county-based census tract geography. Ideally, tribal census tracts remain consistent between censuses making it possible to compare statistics for the same geographic area from decade to decade. Therefore, we request that you do not change the outer boundaries of any census tracts when making census tract updates, unless it is a correction due to boundary or feature inaccuracy. The Census Bureau uses tribal census tracts in the tabulation and presentation of data from the decennial census and the American Community Survey (ACS).

Census Bureau criteria specify that tribal census tracts must:

- Nest within an individual American Indian reservation (AIR) or off-reservation trust land (ORTL).
- Cover the entire land and water area of an AIR and/or ORTL.
- Be reasonably compact and contiguous. Non-contiguous boundaries are permitted only when a physically separate area would not meet population and housing unit count requirements for a separate tribal census tract.
- Meet the population/housing unit thresholds as specified in Table 1. A tract that exceeds thresholds, either above or below, may remain unchanged with justifications. For federally recognized American Indian tribes with AIRs and ORTLs that have fewer than 1,200 residents, the Census Bureau will define one census tract that encompasses the entirety of the AIR or ORTL.
- Have codes that are six characters long with a leading "T" alphabetic character followed by five numeric codes having an implied decimal between the fourth and fifth character; for example, T01000 translates as tribal census tract 10.

Census Bureau guidelines recommend that tribal census tracts:

- Have boundaries that follow visible features (e.g., roads, rivers) or other acceptable features (e.g., tribal reservation, tribal subdivision, incorporated place, and minor civil division boundaries).
- Be merged when tribal census tracts are below the minimum population (1,200) or housing unit (480) count with adjacent tribal census tracts. Participants should split any tribal census tracts above maximum population (8,000) or housing unit (3,200) counts into multiple tribal census tracts. When revising tribal census tracts, participants should aim to meet or exceed the optimum population (4,000) or housing unit (1,600) thresholds to increase the reliability of sample data for tribal census tracts.

**Table 1: Tribal Census Tract Thresholds**

Census Tract Type	Threshold Type	Optimum	Minimum	Maximum
Tribal Census Tracts	Population	4,000	1,200	8,000
	Housing unit	1,600	480	3,200

***Refer to the Respondent Guide for complete instructions.***